

Frequently Asked Questions (F.A.Q) about Community Early Childhood Councils

1. What is a Community Early Childhood Council (CECC)?

Community Early Childhood Councils (CECCs) were created as part of Governor Paul E. Patton's Early Childhood Initiative, KIDS NOW. House Bill 706, is the enabling legislation for the initiative.

2. Why have CECCs?

Although collaboration is critical at the federal and state level, direct services for families and children happen or don't happen at the local or community level. The creation of CECCs provides a vehicle to develop that important collaboration at the local level. It provides a mechanism for attracting additional resources to meet the early childhood needs of a community. It also provides a means for local stakeholders to provide input to state policy makers and planners on the Early Childhood Development Plan that is developed by the Early Childhood Development Authority.

3. How are CECCs created?

House Bill 706 designates Family Resource Youth Service Center (FRYSC) and Child Care Resources and Referral Agency (CCRR) staff the responsibility of convening a Community Early Childhood Council. Conveners and others in the service area are encouraged to use local knowledge of their communities to identify any existing collaborative groups that focus on early childhood education in whole or in part.

4. Who are the members of a CECC?

Members may be appointed who represent local agencies and organizations, including but not limited to the organizations or agencies specified in HB 706 and listed below. Each agency or organization may not have more than one (1) member on the CECC. A broad based group should be invited including but not limited to:

- Early Childhood Advocate
- Faith Community
- School District
- Family Resource
- Military
- Head Start
- Child Care
- Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
- Child Care Consumer
- County Extension
- Dept. for Public Health
- Higher Education
- United Way
- Public Library
- Civic Organization
- Family Literacy Agency
- Regional Training Center
- Community Action
- Government
- Business Community
- Home Schooling Association
- Health Care Professional
- Foster or Adoptive Parent
- Agencies serving children with disabilities
- Home Visitation Agency

5. House Bill 706 lists 27 agencies, representatives or individuals who may be members of a CECC. Do all these members have to be part of a CECC?

No, it is recognized that not every service area of a CECC will have all the agencies and organizations listed in the legislation.

6. Can CECCs have members not listed in HB 706?

Absolutely. The list in HB 706 was not meant to be exhaustive or limiting in deciding whom the members of a CECC could be. FRYSCs and CCRRs can use their local contacts to identify any potential members that could enhance early care and education in their communities.

7. What if there is an existing group in a community that works on early childhood issues?

The intent of the CECCs is not to duplicate existing groups or councils within a service area. Conveners are encouraged to use local knowledge of their service areas to identify any existing collaborative groups, such as District Early Intervention Committee (DEICs) and Preschool Interagency Planning Council (PIPCs), that deal with early childhood education in whole, or in part. Conveners should discuss the willingness of the existing group to adopt additional membership and any other requirements of Councils as outlined in legislation. If the existing group members are agreeable to meeting the requirements of a Council, then conveners should proceed with the process of inviting additional members and determining term limits. If no existing group is identified or is agreeable to expansion, the conveners should proceed with the forming of a Council.

8. Where can a CECC be located?

Ultimately, CECCs service areas will cover all 120 counties in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. A service area can be no smaller than a county, however, counties are given the option of joining with other counties to form one single service area. Service areas that are composed of more than one county will have one council representing that service area.

9. Can a CECC incorporate as a non-profit?

A CECC may incorporate as a 501(c)(3) organization, but it is not necessary in order to carry out the purpose, planning or activities of the council as identified in legislation. A CECC may decide to incorporate if they determine it is beneficial for them.

10. Can a CECC provide direct services?

CECCs were designed to be a collaborative, coordinating body for services to young child and their families at the local level. The intent in the creation of the CECC is not to add another direct service provider to the community.

11. Where do the funds and resources come from to fund the CECCs activities?

The funds and resources necessary for the CECC to carry out its purpose, planning, and activities, must come from the service area of a council. Funds available on a competitive basis may be available to improve the quality of early care and education in the area.

12. Are there “conflict of interest” questions to consider in conducting CECC activities?

Yes. The RFP states that no member of the CECC may directly benefit from the conduction of CECC business. If a voting item or issue comes before the council that could benefit a member, or the agency or organization they represent, that member should abstain from voting on that item or issue.

13. When should CECCs be formed?

Now! Conveners should begin the process of identifying times, dates, and locations for an initial council meeting and contacting potential members. If you have any questions, please contact Hanan Osman at 502-564-8341 or hosman@kde.state.ky.us

14. Will there be additional opportunities to ask questions on the organization, structure, activities etc. of CECCs?

Training to support application of an RFP will be provided each year funding is available. Each spring an annual meeting of CECCs will be held. Information and training relevant to the CECCs will be discussed at this annual meeting

15. What is important to remember about the RFP?

The most important thing to remember is to follow the directions outlined in the RFP. All necessary components will be outlined in detail. However, CECCs are encouraged to be creative in their responses to the RFP. Remember that training will be provided to assist with responding to the RFP, but it is the unique experiences, ideas, and continuing efforts of the community that will move the RFP past the technical requirements. Regardless, one can anticipate that all RFPs will include the following:

- Include information from all counties (earmarked and competitive) regarding an assessment of their resource and needs.
- Develop innovative approaches to improving early care and education (defined as care arrangements outside the home).
- Address innovative approaches to increase child care providers participation in STARS for KIDS NOW Quality Rating System.
- Develop a plan of action reflective of the findings of the assessment.
- Demonstrate a manageable and financially sound methodology.
- Identify the impact on the desired outcomes.
- Identify and demonstrate collaborative new partnerships within the early childhood community.
- Identify the impact on a significant number of children.
- Document sustainability within the service area after funding lapses.

16. Is it okay for one CCR&R person to serve on the council of two counties? Is it okay for one CCR&R person to serve on two or three councils after they are formed?

Yes. This does not dilute the intent of HB 706 legislation or the Early Childhood Development Authority to ensure diversity of Community Early Childhood Council (CECC) membership.

17. This question refers to page four of the HB 706 handout where it says: "Conveners should discuss the willingness of the existing group to adopt term limits, additional membership, and any other requirements of councils as outlined in legislation." What are those other requirements?

HB706 outlines the following requirements in the forming and functioning of a CECC:

A council shall be composed of no fewer than seven (7) and no more than twenty-seven (27) members.

Members may be appointed who represent local agencies and organizations, including but not limited to the organizations or agencies listed [in HB706], with no more than one (1) member from each

(2) Members shall serve on a community early childhood council on a voluntary basis and receive no compensation or expense reimbursement for their service.

(3) (a) Members shall serve for a term of two (2) years and until their successors are appointed, except that for those members initially appointed, the terms shall be as follows:

1. One-third (1/3) of the members shall be appointed for three (3) years;
2. One-third (1/3) shall be appointed for two (2) years; and
3. One-third (1/3) shall be appointed for one (1) year.

(b) Vacancies shall be appointed for unexpired terms in the same manner as original appointments.

(4) A community early childhood council shall collaborate with the District Early Intervention Committee, the Preschool Interagency Planning Council, and other existing interagency groups in the service area.

(5) A community early childhood council may apply for a competitive grant from the authority, consistent with a state plan for grant participation as established by the authority. Grant proposals shall:

- (a) Include a needs assessment and budget proposal for the respective service area served by a council;
- (b) Not include administrative costs that exceed five percent (5%); and
- (c) Contain a signed statement from each member of the council certifying that no program, agency, or individual that may receive part of an award would constitute a conflict of interest

(6) A community early childhood council shall submit a quarterly report to the authority that details the activities and services of the council, including the progress that the council has made toward addressing the early childhood development goals for its designated service area and recommendations that may be included in the state plan.

(7) Any records that are in the custody of a community early childhood council, a designated service provider, or a grantee that contain personal and identifying information relating to a family or children receiving services through the council shall be confidential and not subject to public disclosure, except as otherwise authorized by law.

18. Do the CCR&Rs and FRYSCs continue to act in the capacity of conveners in perpetuity for the purpose of appointing new council members when terms expire or there is the need to fill vacant unexpired terms?

No. Community Early Childhood Councils should make arrangements for appointing new members, not FRYSCs or CCR&Rs.

19. If conveners wish to appoint members other than those of the specific "categories" listed in HB706, how do they determine who those members are and how do they determine membership for purposes of voting?

HB706 clearly states that conveners ".... may be appointed who represent local agencies and organizations, including but not limited to the organizations or agencies listed [in HB706] with no more than one (1) member from each." Conveners have the authority to identify those local agencies and organizations that may provide additional members. Conveners are encouraged to engage other potential members in discussions and "brainstorming" sessions to determine those additional members and the expertise and knowledge in identifying and addressing the early childhood development needs of young children and their families for the community the council will serve. Conveners should ensure diversity in council membership. An organization or agency should have only one voting member represented on the CECC

20. What are the recommended Assessment tools identified in the Building A Strong Foundation for School Success: Kentucky's Continuous Assessment Guide (www.kidsnow.kv.gov) that may be purchased by the early childhood programs through Community Early Childhood Councils' mini-grants?

Recommended Screening Instruments include:

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| • Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) | • Denver II |
| • Ages and Stages Questionnaire – Social Emotional | • Developmental Observation Checklist System (DOCS) |
| • Brigance Infant and Toddler Screen | • Learning Accomplishment Profile (LAP-D) Screen |
| • Brigance Early Preschool Screen | • Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (DIAL III) |
| • Brigance Preschool Screening | |

Recommended Classroom/Instructional Instruments include:

- Assessment Evaluation Programming System (AEPS)
- Transdisciplinary Play Based Assessment (TPBA)
- Brigance Inventory of Early Development
- The Creative Curriculum
- The Carolina Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers with Special Needs
- The Carolina Curriculum for Preschoolers with Special Needs
- Hawaii Early Learning Profile
- Early Learning Accomplishment Profile (E-LAP)
- Learning Accomplishment Profile III (LAP-III)
- The Work Sampling System (WSS)
- The OUNCE Scale
- High Scope Child Observation Record (COR)

Programs will be able to purchase approved assessment tools only after attending assessment training from Training into Practice Project (TIPP) www.ihdi.uky.edu/tipp Information and registration information is available at this website.

21. Are after school programs eligible for Community Early Childhood Councils funds?

Community Early Childhood Councils funds are to be used by programs that are licensed or certified. Funds may be used by after school programs as long as they are licensed and participating in STARS for KIDS NOW. The council's funds are meant to improve the whole quality of the programs including those providing care beyond age five. Program improvements are still tied to environment rating scales, in this case the School Age Care Environmental Rating Scale.

22. Must the councils purchase equipment and or materials (e.g. in a mini-grant activity) from only one vendor?

No. There is no restriction as to which vendor councils may use. Councils and programs may use many different vendors to meet their equipment and materials needs. THERE ARE NO APPROVED VENDORS. As always, ALL purchases for classroom materials must be approved by the Division of Early Childhood Development BEFORE the purchase, contact Hanan Osman at 502-564-8341.

23. What is the definition of consumables and basic equipment? What if the basic equipment is essential to improve provider's score on an Environmental Rating Scale?

Basic equipment includes mats, cots, high chairs, tables and chairs. Consumable supplies include anything "used up" and must be replaced. Examples of consumables include paper, paints, crayons, clay, playdoh, etc. If basic equipment such as low shelves are requested, it must be tied to a need identified in an environment rating scale evaluation.

24. Are all licensed programs eligible to apply for mini-grants?

Mini-grants are not the only options for grant activities. If this is the activity it needs to be structured around the desired outcomes of the RFP and apply to licensed programs, that are participating in STARS for KIDS NOW.

25. Who should be a Fiscal Agent?

The fiscal agent must be a government agency such as a school, public library, health department, local government—county judge executive or mayor.

26. Can the Councils funds be used for playgrounds surfacing?

Yes, however these surfaces are expensive and may have a short life. It is recommended that the early childhood programs provide matching funds.

27. What procedures should Councils follow for Materials Approval?

All orders must be pre-approved by the Division of Early Childhood Development. From the beginning we have tried to assure that developmentally appropriate materials are being purchased with the KIDS NOW dollars. Councils purchase the materials and distribute them only after approval, contact Hanan Osman at 502-564-8341.

28. Who receives the dollars to purchase equipment and materials?

Payment is made directly to the vendor and not to programs. Checks are not distributed by the Council for the purchase of materials to early childhood programs.

29. Can CECC funds be used with other funds to accomplish a goal?

In broad terms, a Council must check with the Division of Early Childhood Development to ensure that the purpose ties back to the goals of improving quality for children in centers and homes, and is stated in their proposal for funding.

30. What are the Grant Coordinator responsibilities, qualifications and salary?

Personnel should have an early childhood background unless it is strictly a clerical position. The wages must reflect the prevailing part time wage for that community.

31. May the Community Early Childhood Councils purchase approved assessment tools?

For this current funding year (July 2004-June 2005), Community Early Childhood Councils may purchase approved screening and classroom/instructional tools to use as a lending library for early childhood programs. Approved Screening Instruments are listed in the *Kentucky Early Childhood Continuous Assessment Guide*, Screening Section, page 6 Approved Classroom/Instructional Instruments are listed in the *Kentucky Early Childhood Continuous Assessment Guide*,

Classroom/Instructional section, pages 9-10. In future years approved instruments are to be purchased through a mini-grant system for providers. The purchase is to be completed upon completion of the Council's mini-grant application and submission of a copy of the Certificate of Completion provided by the Training Into Practice Project (TIPP). www.ihdi.uky.edu/tipp

32. Who may use the assessment tool for children?

Every early childhood program/instructional program should be conducting an early childhood continuous assessment system. That system includes screening, referral to diagnostic assessment when appropriate, and conducting a classroom/instructional assessment. Administrators, teachers, and parents should be involved in developing the early childhood continuous assessment system in their respective programs. The *Kentucky Early Childhood Continuous Assessment Guide* provides information, resources, and crosswalks to support development and/or refinement of a continuous assessment system which leads to improved instruction and improved child outcomes.

33. Is it mandatory for providers who participate in STARS for KIDS NOW to implement an assessment system in their program?

As stated in the previous answer, all quality early childhood programs have a continuous assessment system in place. At this time, having a continuous assessment system in place is not a requirement of STARS for KIDS NOW participation.

34. Is the TIPP assessment training the only training providers can attend?

If early childhood programs want to access the Community Early Childhood Council funds to purchase approved instruments, staff of the programs must submit proof that they have attended the TIPP screening and/or classroom/instruction training. www.ihdi.uky.edu/tipp

Additional training is available to programs to expand their skills and knowledge in the area of early childhood assessment. Please refer to the *Kentucky Early Childhood Continuous Assessment Guide* or the kidsnow.ky.gov

Appropriate, continuous assessment of early childhood programs is a complex subject. Universities, and community colleges have courses that provide skills and knowledge in early childhood assessment. KIDS NOW Scholarship dollars can be accessed to enroll in these courses. In addition the Regional Training Centers have staff qualified to provide training on approved assessment tools. Some CCR&R's may have trainers who meet the publisher requirements to provide specific training.

35. Can Community Early Childhood Councils use state funds to purchase assessment instruments that are not on the approved list?

No. Community Early Childhood Councils can use state dollars to purchase only approved screening or classroom/instructional tools.

36. If an early childhood program is using an assessment instrument that is not on the approved list, can state funds be used to purchase that instrument or pay for training on that instrument?

No, state funds awarded to Community Early Childhood Councils can ONLY be used to purchase approved instruments.

37. Can the Community Early Childhood Council members use funds to attend assessment training provided by TIPP?

No. The target audience for the TIPP assessment training is staff of child care programs who will be implementing or refining an early childhood continuous assessment system. Others may register for the training, but Community Early Childhood funds should not be used to pay for training of Council members. Council funds should be used to send child care providers to TIPP training, following the required procedure as stated on page 3 of the RFP, 2006 *“KIDS NOW funds can be used to complete the required training and/or to support the registration cost of training (excluding travel, meal and lodging) specifically related to approved assessment tools.”*